

Good Deeds are powered by a hearing heart.

Good Morning!

My name is Jeff Merry and I'm usually holding a guitar and leading worship. But today I wanted to talk with you about a couple of things that the Lord has been showing me lately.

I am excited about where God seems to be taking us as a church.

My title this morning is Good Deeds are powered by a hearing heart. Not just a listening heart. There is a difference.

Let me explain:

Snow ditch help

A few weeks ago I flew up to Fort Wayne Indiana to do some teaching on worship and when I returned I had planned to take a few days to do a personal prayer retreat. I was also feeling a little tired and needed to rest. So Monday afternoon I packed up and headed for a friends cabin up in Prescott. On the way it started raining. Then the rain turned to snow and by the time I reached Young's Farm, the snow was accumulating on the highway.

Now I wasn't too worried I grew up in the northwest where we get snow and I felt comfortable driving in it.

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In fact I was passing other cars that seemed to be feeling a little timid. I thought to myself, I'll just lead and they can follow my tracks. Help them out a little so they don't get stuck. The snow continued to accumulate and I knew it was getting bad when I saw the snow plow truck coming from the direction I was going.

Everything was fine as I approached the intersection where I needed to turn left. The light was still green and I thought I could make it. Well I made the light, just not the turn. I turned the wheel but my truck kept going straight. I slid right through the intersection and into the ditch on the other side.

I thought, ok Lord this is nice. I'm trying to get to a place where I can rest and here I am stuck in a ditch.

I got out to look around. Cars were going by and even a tow truck passed by. Then a big red pick up with 4wheel drive stopped and asked if I wanted help. I said yes and under my breath I was saying thank you Lord! It took two tries but he pulled me out and then he said he would follow me to make sure I could make it.

I was thankful!

This guy didn't need to stop. Nobody else was. It was snowing like crazy and he probably needed to get home soon. But for some reason he stopped to help me, and I was very thankful!

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You see good deeds have an impact on people. No matter how big or small it may seem to you, it matters to the one who needs help.

Check out this TV Commercial from Liberty Mutual: Good deeds make a difference to others.

Over the past couple of months Pastor Bob has been giving us a fresh look at the Church and ourselves as Christians. It hasn't always been pretty but it has been practical. One thing he said that has stuck with me comes from a verse he has quoted a few times.

John 20:21 This is where Jesus is encouraging his disciples to have courage and the right perspective. Here is what Jesus said:

"as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you!"

I am sending you? In speaking to his disciples Jesus is also speaking to believers today. Well, where is he sending us and what is he sending us to do? The Bible answers this question in Matt. 5:14-16.

Turn to Matt. 5:14-16 says this:

14"You are the light of the world.

A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.

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Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Jesus is sending us to do good deeds!

Bob taught on this last year and in his message he said:
“Like light, good deeds shine that others may see. We are to shine by doing good deeds.

It’s not so that we’ll get the applause. Our good deeds are to be made visible so that the world will glorify our Father—so that people will praise Him for how good He is. The light of our good deeds lets people see how good God is. It lifts Him up where people can see. It’s unmistakable.”

Why is it important to do good deeds, because actions speak louder than words. Our actions demonstrate what is inside us. And when what’s inside us is the Father’s love, grace, perspective and understanding, then people see the Father.

Error! Reference source not found. illustration:

I was out in my driveway one day checking my brake pads and my next door neighbor came over and asked me what I was doing. As we talked I learned that he was a

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Dr. from India studying to be licensed here in the US. He had come from a community where everything was done for him, but here was different. So over the weeks and months I was able to help he and his family in different ways. One day he seemed quite nervous and I asked him what was wrong. He told me that he had a very big test coming up and he wasn't sure if he was ready. Now this guy is a disciplined student and if anybody was ready it was him. I told him that when I get nervous I like to pray and ask God for help. I asked him if I could pray for him. Knowing that he was a Hindu I said, now I will be praying to Jesus Christ who I believe cares for you and can help you. Is that ok with you?" He said yes, so I prayed. 2 weeks later he came over to thank me saying "Your God did it! I got the highest score in the class and the highest score I have ever gotten as well."

1 Peter 2:12 says: "Keep your behavior excellent among the gentiles so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation".

I like the way the Message puts it:

Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives.

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The reason why we are to do good deeds is so that nonbelievers can see and experience something that they didn't know or expect. God's love, and God's grace.

The point is that people notice our actions. They are watching, judging, and responding to our deeds, both good and bad!

Check out this country song by Rodney Atkins.

Song about daddy, I want to be just like you.

Artist/Band: Atkins Rodney

Lyrics for Song: Watching You

Lyrics for Album: If You're Going Through Hell

Drivin' through town just my boy and me
With a Happy Meal in his booster seat
Knowin' that he couldn't have the toy 'til his nuggets
were gone.

A green traffic light turned straight to red
I hit my brakes and mumbled under my breath.
His fries went a flyin', and his orange drink covered his
lap

Well, then my four year old said a four letter word
It started with "S" and I was concerned
So I said, "Son, now where'd you learn to talk like that?"

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Chorus:

He said, "I've been watching you, dad ain't that cool?
I'm your buckaroo, I wanna be like you.
And eat all my food and grow as tall as you are.
We got cowboy boots and camo pants
Yeah, we're just alike, hey, ain't we dad?
I want to do everything you do.
So I've been watching you."

We got back home and I went to the barn
I bowed my head and I prayed real hard
Said, "Lord, please help me help my stupid self."
Just this side of bedtime later that night
Turnin' on my son's Scooby-Doo nightlight.
He crawled out of bed and he got down on his knees.
He closed his little eyes, folded his little hands
Spoke to God like he was talkin' to a friend.
And I said, "Son, now where'd you learn to pray like
that?"

Chorus:

He said, "I've been watching you, dad ain't that cool?
I'm your buckaroo, I want to be like you.
And eat all my food and grow as tall as you are.
We like fixin' things and holding mamma's hand
Yeah, we're just alike, hey, ain't we dad?"

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I want to do everything you do; so I've been watching you"

With tears in my eyes I wrapped him in a hug.

Said, "My little bear is growin' up."

And he said, "But when I'm big I'll still know what to do."

"Cause I've been watching you, dad ain't that cool?

I'm your buckaroo, I want to be like you.

And eat all my food and grow as tall as you are.

By then I'll be strong as superman

We'll be just alike, hey, won't we dad

When I can do everything you do.

'cause I've been watchin' you."

hey yeah uh huh

It doesn't matter who you are. How old or young, if you are breathing in and out you have influence in the lives of those around you. And if we care about how we influence them we need something pretty powerful, a hearing heart!

What do you mean by a hearing heart?

There is a difference between listening and hearing.

Having a hearing heart has been mankind's problem from the beginning. God said to Adam, listen up. I have

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given you everything you need. Just stay away from this one tree. Got it?

Adam listened to God but I don't think he heard God in his heart because when it came down to it he didn't even question, he just took a big bite.

God spoke to Joshua, and David, and to Solomon in similar ways.

This morning I want us to look at Solomon for a moment. God had a very unique conversation with Solomon that we can learn from.

Solomon is known as the one who had wisdom. He wrote 3 books that are in the Bible. One of them containing 513 pearls of wisdom. It's the book called Proverbs.

So how did Solomon get this great wisdom?

Turn to 1 Kings 3:3-15

3 Solomon loved the Lord and followed all the decrees of his father, David, except that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local places of worship.

This by the way isn't just some local church. It was a pagan shrine.

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4 The most important of these places of worship was at Gibeon, so the king went there and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings. 5 That night the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"

6 Solomon replied, "You showed faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued your faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne.

7 "Now, O Lord my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around. 8 And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! 9 Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. 11 So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies—12 I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! 13 And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life!

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14 And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life.”

15 Then Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem and stood before the Ark of the Lord's Covenant, where he sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. Then he invited all his officials to a great banquet.

I'd like us to notice a couple of things in this passage.

First: Notice that God initiated this conversation and it wasn't because Solomon had done anything good that day.

Commentator Matthew Henry says this:

“Solomon's dream was not a common one. While his bodily powers were locked up in sleep, the powers of his soul were strengthened; he was enabled to receive the Divine vision, and to make a suitable choice. Solomon's making such a choice when asleep, and the powers of reason least active, showed it came from the grace of God.”

Second: Notice what Solomon asked for specifically was an understanding heart. In Hebrew the word is Shama whose root meaning is to hear, understand, or obey. In essence Solomon was asking God for a heart that hears your voice.

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Dr. Thomas L. Constable comments on the heart:

"The heart in Israelite thought is the center of the psychic self. It

includes especially mental activity but is broader in scope than English

'mind,' embracing the feelings and will as well. The heart is susceptible to become hardened, to be made fat (Isa. 6:10), and to dwell on evil (Gen. 6:5; 8:21); indeed, it is 'deceitful above all things' (Jer. 17:9). It is over against these capabilities of the heart that Solomon's request is to be understood.

A 'hearing heart' [v. 9] is one that is open, receptive, teachable (Isa. 50:4).

Solomon wasn't asking for a library of law books, he was asking for God to guide him with his voice through the problems that were sure to come.

Constable continues:

"The king was the supreme judge and final arbiter. Within his domain, the ideal king sought to achieve what was right, to vindicate the just, to

protect the rights of the weak. And this was achieved in practice by a

series of shrewd and just decisions or verdicts or

judgments all of which are examples of what our text calls 'right'."

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Solomon was the head of a nation and he knew he needed help. The kind of help that was immediate and personal.

He asked for a heart that hears God's voice! And he got it!

Third: Notice that Solomon changed something. He now went to worship the true God at the Ark of the Covenant. So what changed? Solomon no longer could simply worship God in ritualistic way. He now had a new relationship with God that was activated in conversation! Solomon wasn't simply following ritual any more, He now was hearing from the one he was worshipping and so it made a difference how he worshiped.

Jesus spoke of this new kind of worship in John 4.

When he was speaking to a woman at a well. She was getting water in the middle of the day when know one else is usually around because she had a shameful reputation and didn't want to be bothered by the accusations of the people in the town.

But Jesus was there and He started a conversation with her.

"Please give me a drink." 8 Jesus was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

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9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans.[b] She said to Jesus, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?”

10 Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.”

11 “But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?”

13 Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

15 “Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.”

16 “Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her.

17 “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied.

Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

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19 "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. 20 So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim,[c] where our ancestors worshiped?"

21 Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. 23 But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

Jesus does something remarkable here. First he reveals something about God, "God is spirit" And how we are to connect with, Him, "in spirit and truth." Worshiping God is a conversation between us and God. God speaks to us through our spirit and we choose to respond in truth. This simplifies our definition of worship and brings us all the way back to a conversation in the garden between Adam and God.

So how are you doing are you simply listening to God, or are you hearing him?

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Examples of a hearing heart:

Mike my neighbor:

Eric from R.B. Conversation about Al:

Hospital visit: Jan, Dino,

Anthony and his divorce and his daughter:

Trading My sorrows in Congo:

Promises that God will speak and be with you:

John 14:17 He abides with you and will be in you.

VS 26 He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Lk 12:12 “for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

Lk 21:15 “For I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.”

Matt. 10:20 “For it is not you who speaks but it is the spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

So my Big Idea is: A hearing heart comes from listening.

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Listening is easy to say but not easy to do. So here are some ideas to help you with your listening:

1) Ask God to help you with your listening. Like Solomon, ask God for a hearing heart.

2) Ask God to send you with his purposes in mind.

3) Ask God to help you see opportunities for doing good deeds.

Hey there may be somebody you meet today that needs to see God's love and grace through one of your good deeds.

Lets pray.